

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A dispensing apparatus comprising a housing, [[and]] a metering tube and a piston for drawing medicament into said metering tube and expelling medicament from said metering tube, said metering tube having an opening to the interior thereof and said housing having a chamber therein for storing medicament, said metering tube being retractable to a filling position in which said opening is in communication with said chamber and extendable to a dispensing position in which said opening is displaced out of said housing for dispensing medicament from the dispensing apparatus and retractable to a filling position, and said opening being in communication with said chamber when said metering tube is in said filling position; and a piston for drawing medicament into said metering tube and expelling medicament from said metering tube.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the length of the piston stroke is fixed.
4. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one member is provided on said metering tube to limit the displacement of the piston in at least one direction.
5. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the piston is provided inside said metering tube.

6. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said piston is moveable with said metering tube.

7. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one stop is provided to limit the displacement of the metering tube.

8. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the dispensing apparatus is provided in a hand-held inhaler for oral delivery of medicament.

9. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising apparatus for delivering the dispensed medicament as an atomised mist.

10. (Currently Amendment) A method of operating dispensing apparatus comprising a housing and a metering tube, the housing having a chamber and medicament being provided in said chamber, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) retracting said metering tube within said chamber to a filling position in which an opening in the metering tube is in communication with said chamber;

(b) drawing medicament into said metering tube from said chamber;

(c) extending said metering tube to a dispensing position in which said opening is displaced out of said housing for dispensing medicament from the dispensing apparatus; and

(d) expelling medicament from said metering tube; and

wherein said apparatus further comprises a piston, and wherein movement of the piston in a first direction draws medicament into the metering tube in accordance with step (b), and movement of the piston in a second direction expels medicament from the metering tube in accordance with step (d).

11. (Canceled).

12. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the piston and the metering tube are moved together during steps (a) and (c).

13. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the medicament is dispensed from the metering tube to an atomising apparatus and the method further comprises the step(s) of atomizing the medicament and delivering it as an atomised mist.

14. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the metering tube is retracted before the medicament is atomised.

15. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the dispensing apparatus is provided in a hand-held inhaler for oral delivery of medicament.

16-17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Presented) Dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said opening is positioned such that the medicament is both drawn through and expelled from said opening.

19. (Previously Presented) A method of using dispensing apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein the medicament is both drawn through and expelled from said opening.

20. (New) Dispensing apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said piston adjusts relative to said metering tube to draw medicament into said metering tube.

21. (New) Dispensing apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said opening is provided at a distal end of said metering tube and the distal end of said metering tube and a

distal end of said piston are positioned at a location external to said housing when said metering tube is in said dispensing position.

22. (New) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein movement of the piston in the first direction results in movement of the piston relative to said metering tube.

23. (New) A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein during dispensing of medicament outside said chamber, a distal end of said metering tube and a distal end of said piston are positioned external to said housing, and said opening is provided at the distal end of said metering tube.

24. (New) A dispensing apparatus comprising a housing, a metering tube and a piston for drawing medicament into said metering tube and expelling medicament from said metering tube, said metering tube having an opening to the interior thereof and said housing having a chamber therein for storing medicament,

said metering tube being extendable to a dispensing position and retractable to a filling position, and said opening being in communication with said chamber when said metering tube is in said filling position; and

wherein said piston adjusts relative to said metering tube to draw medicament into said metering tube.

25. (New) The dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 24 wherein said piston slides relative to a fixed-in-position metering tube during a drawing of medicament into said metering tube.

26. (New) A method of operating a dispensing apparatus comprising a housing and a metering tube, the housing having a chamber and medicament being provided in said chamber, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

(a) retracting said metering tube to a filling position;
(b) drawing medicament into said metering tube from said chamber;
(c) extending said metering tube to a dispensing position; and
(d) expelling medicament from said metering tube; and
wherein said apparatus further comprises a piston, and wherein movement of the piston in a first direction draws medicament into the metering tube in accordance with step (b), and movement of the piston in a second direction expels medicament from the metering tube in accordance with step (d), and wherein movement of the piston in the first direction results in movement of the piston relative to said metering tube.

27. The dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein said piston slides relative to a fixed-in-position metering tube during a drawing of medicament into said metering tube.

(b) drawing medicament into said metering tube from said chamber;
(c) extending said metering tube to a dispensing position; and
(d) expelling medicament from said metering tube; and
wherein said apparatus further comprises a piston, and wherein movement of the piston in a first direction draws medicament into the metering tube in accordance with step (b), and movement of the piston in a second direction expels medicament from the metering tube in accordance with step (d), and wherein movement of the piston in the first direction results in movement of the piston relative to said metering tube.

27. The dispensing apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein said piston slides relative to a fixed-in-position metering tube during a drawing of medicament into said metering tube.